

Chas. Barry.

The Test Laws defended.

A

S E R M O N

PREACHED AT

ST. PHILLIP'S CHURCH in BIRMINGHAM,

On SUNDAY, JANUARY the 3d, 1790.

WITH A PREFACE CONTAINING

Remarks on Dr. PRICE's REVOLUTION SERMON,
and other Publications.

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By GEORGE CROFT, D. D.

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PREACHED AT

ST. PHILIP'S CHURCH IN BIRMINGHAM

ON SUNDAY, JANUARY 10, 1886

WITH A TRIBUTE TO THE

REMARKS OF DR. FRANKLIN



BY GEORGE CHITT, D.D.

MASTEE OF THE GRAMMAR SCHOOL AT BIRMINGHAM, AND
CHAPLAIN TO THE LORD OF ALBANY

BIRMINGHAM

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PREFACE.

THE Author of the following Sermon is conscious of its imperfections, which the candid reader may be disposed to pardon, when he considers the many avocations, to which a public instructor of youth, and a parish minister must be subject.

It was once intended to subjoin an appendix, containing an account of the conduct of the Puritans, Presbyterians, and Independents, from the beginning of Elizabeth's reign. But this design, from want of leisure, must be relinquished. Whoever wishes to be properly informed, may consult Madox and Grey's refutation of Neal, in 4 vols. octavo. Swift's Tale of a Tub sufficiently exposes them, but it requires much knowledge of their history to be perfectly understood.

The shades of difference between the three denominations it is neither necessary nor possible to point out. Many of them vary not more from each other, than, in the space of a few years, they have varied from themselves.

Of this a melancholy instance occurred in the town and neighbourhood of Beverley in Yorkshire. The cruel treatment of a minister sinking under age and infirmity, and the admission of illiterate men and mechanics, as preachers in the meeting-house, created so general and so just a dislike of the Dissenters, that the corporation determined to exclude every one of them from their council.

In respect to sectaries, the town of Hull was, nine years ago, in a deplorable condition, with this additional aggravation of the misfortune, that enthusiasm had gained possession of one church entirely, and of the other, in the afternoon. Should the reader ask, what connexion there is between the two churches so circumstanced and other places of worship, he will be pleased to recollect, that these seemingly discordant parties are united by a common hostility against *the words of truth and soberness* delivered by our regular clergy. In the parish of West-Bromwich, in Staffordshire, the alliance is exemplified with less disguise, a late teacher there carried his pupils alternately to the church and the meeting-house, and his memory was celebrated by a funeral sermon in each.

While

PREFACE.

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While the Dissenters are filling our newspapers with praises of themselves, and invectives against us, might it not be desirable, as is hinted in the Sermon, that the principal inhabitants of every district should give a true account of them? It would probably appear that they are collectively very much disliked, or, if such a supposition be groundless, they will gain credit by the examination.

The charge of Republican principles against them, harsh as it may be thought, is well-founded. He, who speaks with complacency of Oliver Cromwell, or asserts that the trappings of royalty are foreign to the purposes of government, and that the proper method would be to select from the people a man distinguished for his wisdom and integrity, must be stigmatised as an enemy to the English constitution, and must be commiserated for his ignorance of human nature. Experience soon taught the different nations of the world, that partly from want of principle, and partly from want of discernment, some stated rule of succession was necessary, which neither force, nor folly, nor caprice could violate.

Dr. Price's last sermon abounds with vulgarity, virulence, and malignity. Of his vulgarity, the following instances will suffice—p. 6. "a blind attachment to a *spot*, where he enjoys no rights, and is disposed of as if he was a *beast*." p. 22. "by manifesting an *objectness*—" "I have lately observed in these kingdoms too near approaches to this *abjectness*."—"more like a *beard* crawling at the feet of a master." p. 33. "he was a *fool* as well as a bigot." And, by the way, we may observe how often in common life effrontery and coarseness of manners are mistaken for honesty and sincerity. A nearer inspection undeceives some of us, though the general deception remain. *Shakespeare*, that great analyser of the human mind, has expressed himself on this subject, with his usual vigour and energy, *King Lear*, Act ii. Scene 2.

This is some fellow
Who having been praised for bluntness, doth affect
A faucy roughness; and contrains the garb
Quite from his nature: He cannot flatter, he!—
An honest mind and plain:—he must speak truth:
An they will take it, so: if not, he's plain.
These kind of knaves I know, which in this plainness
Harbour more craft, and more corrupter ends
Than twenty silly ducking observants
That stretch their duties nicely.

Expres-

Expressions of outward respect are justified by the precepts and the example of the apostles themselves, they are a constant exercise of benevolence, they incite us to make each other happy, they check the sallies of resentment, they render *us subject one to another*. It might not be amiss, if the Dissenters, while they are so anxious to do justice to William the Third, would speak with greater reverence of those general benefactors of the world, the first preachers of christianity. The appellation of saints and a remembrance of their fortitude and sufferings inspire the human mind with increasing gratitude and zeal in the cause of religion.

Of his virulence and malignity his reflexions upon the church of England are a pregnant proof. He is willing to impute the general neglect of religion to the defects and absurdities of our established codes of faith and worship, and affirms that the wisest and best of men in our own church wish for a revival of our liturgy and articles. For an answer to the objections of our adversaries, the reader is referred to the London cases, to the abridgement of them by Bennet, to White's Letters, Nichols, Sparrow, Wheatley, &c. and if

better should be wanting, to the Bampton Lectures of 1786. The increase of Deism on the one hand, and of Methodism on the other, is owing to causes which no denomination of Christians can prevent or destroy, the luxury of high life, the profligacy of low life, the lukewarmness of some, the love of novelty in others. Comparisons between us and the church of Rome are so familiar that they have lost all their effect. And if Blackburn, Jebb, Lindsey, Disney, and certain others of the same disposition were, or are the wise and good men alluded to, their superiority will be disputed. Their celebrity is principally owing to their opposition.

But the Doctor exults in the friendship and the authority of the late Lord Chatham, who charged Dr. Drummond with judging uncharitably, in pronouncing the dissenting ministers men of *close ambition*, and who said, "we have a Calvinistic Creed, a Popish Liturgy, and an Arminian Clergy."

The late Archbishop of York was said to know mankind perfectly well, in the familiarity of conversation, many declared he knew them from the king to the cobbler,

Nor

Not are we to be alarmed by the greatness of a name, revered as the noble Earl's ever will be by every Briton. The three Creeds are many hundred years older than Calvin, the Liturgy was never confined to the church of Rome, the article of Predestination is an article of peace to comprehend two contending parties, and the clergy steer between the extremes of every party.

As Lord North's neutrality respecting the application in 1772 is mentioned, the reader will excuse the repetition of the anecdote mentioned in *Cursory Observations chiefly respecting Dr. Priestley*. When a gentleman of the House of Commons remonstrated upon the absurdity of *subscribing to the scriptures only*, his Lordship said, "that many members of the House wished to be excused voting, on account of the obligations they were under to the Dissenters in their elections." "It will be taken care of," said he, "in the House of Lords." Therefore neither indifference in his Lordship, nor conviction in others prevented the lower House from rejecting the petition. Mr. Elwes, member for Berkshire, having no fear of losing a borough election, expressed to me an honest indignation

dignation against the toleration of any sect, whose opinions were not regularly specified. Nor was this the only year in which the Dissenters availed themselves of the prospect of an election. For the author of a pamphlet, entitled, *The right of Protestant Dissenters to a compleat Toleration asserted*, informs us, "That in 1731, the Dissenters of Liverpool determined to apply to the Legislature for relief. That they might have the greater chance of success, they proposed a general application of the Dissenters, when the parliament should be drawing to a close; and hoped that, to secure their influence at the approaching general election, the Minister might be induced to hazard something in their favour. They corresponded with Bristol, and with the assistance of that city, roused their brethren into activity. A committee was appointed in London to conduct the business, and at the end of 1732, every thing was concerted and arranged; but the committee deeming it *an unfit time* to proceed, the design was then laid aside. The Minister afterwards contrived to delay the application from time to time, till, having secured the interest of the Dissenters at the general election, it was no longer necessary to amuse them."

That

That the application afterwards proved successful, I did not know till the last year, and must take this opportunity of correcting a mistake in the Bampton Lectures, and in the *Curfory Observations*, by which the law of subscribing to the Doctrinal Articles is supposed to be still in force. The Reader's curiosity on this part of our subject will be fully gratified in a perusal of Dr. Horsley's *Tracts*.

If the Unitarians were restrained from speaking indecently of the doctrine of the Trinity, if they were enjoined upon certain pains and penalties to confine themselves to the worship of God the Father, without reflexions on those who believe in the divinity of the Son and Holy Ghost, and what is infinitely more material, without reflexions on the Messiah himself, or the existence of the Comforter, this might be deemed persecution by them, but could not well be thought a hardship by others. For the farther discussion of this point I must refer to the Bampton Lectures, p. 130, 131, 132.

It is the firm belief of our clergy, and, as far as information can be had, of many among the

the laity, that while their meeting houses are open, they are weakening, and almost demolishing the whole fabric of christianity. The connexion between its doctrines and its morality has frequently been pointed out, and whatever either immediately, or by remote consequence, lessens the obligations of virtue, ought to be rejected as hostile to the present as well as future happiness of mankind.

The Doctor's reflexions on the equality of representation, the newspaper tax, and on the post-tax, are additional proofs of a mind disposed to spread jealousy and discontent through the kingdom. His application of Simeon's grateful acknowledgment for the coming of Christ to any temporal advantage, enlarged as it may appear to his microscopic eye, is little short of blasphemy.

To expose the absurdities of the national assembly in France would require a volume. With the dispute no members of another kingdom ought to intermeddle. If we are concerned in it, we must be concerned as a nation. And when the noble Earl, whose name closes the appendix, again vouchsafes to become the chairman of those pretended sons of freedom, let him previously, if he can be per-

permitted; lay down his coronet at the feet of his Sovereign, for their antipathy is not confined to *law*.

To refute every part of Dr. Price's Sermon would be a waste of time, and a trespass upon the reader's patience. He has neither explained the principle, nor properly stated the limitations, of *the love of our country*. Cicero has given better information by calling it our common parent, than all the Doctor's loose and desultory description, and from that disdain of unfair advantage, which the Roman orator so frequently inculcates in his offices, I am disposed to think, that had he lived in our days, he would not have endeavoured to accomplish any purpose by *secret cunning* or *mean intimidation*.

The Editor of the Pamphlet already quoted, and particularly recommended by Earl Stanhope, has taken great pains, and has descended to all the meanness of a trifling and a cavilling disputant. He felt a malignant pleasure in exposing defects, which have been removed, and such as are perhaps inseparable from all human laws. The right of voting

at elections and of sitting in parliament unfortunately (as we think) cannot be taken away from the Dissenters. Their gross abuse of these privileges is the best argument that can be brought against additional acts of accommodation. And if the Test Act does not fully answer the purpose, we must remember that the evils of chicanery and evasion are almost irremediable.

That Sir William Meredith, as a candidate for Liverpool, should write a complainant letter to secure the interest of the Dissenters, is nothing wonderful. But the name of that man can add no weight to any cause, or any opinion. In his politics he was a perfect Proteus. Mr. Fox himself is reported to have felt greater affection for the church in the year 1772 than he feels at present, and Mr. Morris of Swansea, by a letter lately published, shews the same ungovernable impetuosity of temper, which distinguished him above his contemporaries in the University of Oxford. They, who wish to know more of him, may enquire in Doctor's Commons. That the respectable name of Mr. Windham, which would do honour to any cause, should appear
in

in favour of the Dissenters, may be a subject of triumph to them, in proportion as it is matter of regret to us;

Among the dead, Locke and Milton are fascinating names. They have conferred innumerable benefits upon mankind, and they have conferred some which they did not foresee nor intend. By visionary, impracticable, nugatory, or absurd plans of education and government, they have illustrated the propriety of such as are established, and have taught us to guard with incessant care against the fatal effects of malignity and spleen.

Our consolation is, that the British legislature will not be influenced by names, but arguments, and that our appeal is made to no particular party.

Whatever reformation in church or state is necessary, we know, from fatal experience, that Dissenters are little qualified to become reformers. While the metropolis in the year 1780, was disgraced by a lawless multitude, under the conduct of an enthusiastic Presbyterian, certain mock patriots at a distance read the shocking account with very little emotion,

emotion, thought all the judges conspiring to enslave the kingdom, except Mr. Justice Gould, and felicitated the public on the destruction of Lord Mansfield's papers. And let those, who impute so much merit to the innovators either at home or abroad, remember what Pindar hath said in the fourth Pythian Ode.

“* It is the more easy thing even for the more weak to shake the state, but to fix it in its place again is difficult all at once, unless God direct the rulers.”

* I have translated the words as literally as possible, for had I put very easy and very weak, I might have been charged with exaggeration.

Ραδιον μεν γαρ πολλην σεις-
-σαι και αφανροτεροις· αλλ' επι χω-
-ρας αυθις εσσαι δυσπαλες
Δη γινεται εξαπιναις
Ει μη θιος αγγεμονεσσι κυβερ-
-ναιηρ γενηται.

S E R M O N.

2 TIMOTHY ii. 21.

IF A MAN THEREFORE PURGE HIMSELF FROM THESE, HE SHALL BE A VESSEL UNTO HONOUR, SANCTIFIED AND MEET FOR THE MASTER'S USE, AND PREPARED UNTO EVERY GOOD WORK.

THERE never was an age, in which the rights of mankind have created more general disputation, than the present, and it is natural to expect, that they will gain the greatest attention, whose plans of reformation promise the highest degree of liberty, and appear to be dictated by the most unbounded humanity. It becomes us, however, not to be seduced by plausible names and by specious appearances. Humanity in excess is the greatest cruelty. In education, it strikes at the root of wholesome discipline, and promises the rewards of industry and perseverance to negligence and supineness. In the punishments which it would substitute for those which the law hath denounced

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against

against notorious offenders, it would multiply offences. In pleading the cause of the people, it brings many from their regular occupations to a wanton censure of their superiors, to absurd jealousies and groundless suspicions, to enquiries which call for the collected wisdom, integrity, and exertions of the best of men. Even the abolition of slavery, which has found so many advocates of every description, seems to require some caution and circumspection, and scripture has been in vain distorted to decide the controversy, since it only contains general precepts of mercy and love. He, *whose kingdom is not of this world*, and who never usurped the authority of a civil magistrate, neither changed nor disputed temporal rights and privileges.

Sober-minded men will, in all cases, guard with unwearied firmness and unremitting industry against the extremes of affected candour on the one hand, and unnecessary severity on the other. The difficulty of this is universally acknowledged, yet rashness and imprudence proceed on their way with imaginary security, as if he were the safest, who cannot, or who will not look before him.

I intend to apply the words of the text to the sacramental test, which is calculated to cleanse

cleanse all those, from whom it is required, *to make them vessels unto honour, sanctified and meet for the master's use, and prepared for every good work.* And in the following discourse I shall endeavour to prove that receiving the holy communion, more especially in the church of England, has a tendency to make men better christians and better citizens, and the obligation to be so increases as they become more rich and more powerful. Secondly, that the Dissenters, whom the law excludes, or intends to exclude from offices, have neither in the present, nor in former times, deserved the indulgence they claim with so much confidence.

To clear the way, it is requisite to shew that the commemoration of Christ's sufferings is more connected with civil and military offices, than is generally imagined. Permit me for a moment to reason with the Socinians, who have degraded this institution of our blessed Saviour to the lowest degree of importance, by denying the doctrine of atonement, by pronouncing Christ a mere man, and a mere martyr to the truth. Let me suppose magistrates, warriors, and others, appointed to offices of trust or dignity, assembled in one of their temples to commemorate the awful event according to their

usage. Might not the minister address them with propriety to the following purport?

“ You are here met to contemplate the ex-
 “ ample, and to remember the death of the
 “ most pious person the world ever knew.
 “ My duty is to point out in general terms the
 “ effect it ought have upon your future con-
 “ duct. Accessions of wealth, power, and
 “ influence, intoxicate the minds of many,
 “ but the humble state in which Jesus lived,
 “ may remind you, that you should not be
 “ captivated by the splendour of any thing
 “ which is great, and that a christian’s exal-
 “ tation must proceed from condescension
 “ and love. Remember that he neither in-
 “ volved himself in unnecessary danger, nor
 “ shewed a want of fortitude, patience, and
 “ resignation, when the evil hour was una-
 “ voidable. *Though he neither brake the*
 “ *bruised reed, nor quenched the smoking flax,*
 “ yet he condemned in the severest terms de-
 “ liberate sin and Pharisaical hypocrisy. He
 “ felt compassion for those who deserved it,
 “ and for those who deserved it not. Remem-
 “ ber that every trust with which you are ho-
 “ noured, enlarges your power of doing good,
 “ and that like him you must embrace and
 “ seek for every opportunity. Was forgive-
 “ nefs

“ nefs the duty he recommended by his last
 “ prayer? It must be practised in a particular
 “ manner by those who are to administer jus-
 “ tice, to temper justice with mercy, who
 “ are to execute the invidious parts of their
 “ office with meekness, who are to feel no
 “ partiality, who are to have no respect of
 “ persons. You, who may be called upon to
 “ sacrifice your lives in defence of your coun-
 “ try, have *now* an opportunity of adding
 “ to your personal courage, by looking for-
 “ ward through the gates of death *to life and*
 “ *immortality brought to light by the gospel.* As
 “ long as nation will rise against nation, your
 “ profession is essential to the preservation of
 “ the state. With the justice and injustice of
 “ the war, in which you may be engaged,
 “ you are not at all concerned. But you may
 “ be frequently required to shew humanity to
 “ your fellow-soldiers, and, when self-defence
 “ does not forbid, to assist in healing the very
 “ wounds you have given, in alleviating the
 “ miseries you have created. Beware lest the
 “ familiarity of havock and devastation ren-
 “ der you callous to the finer feelings of our
 “ nature, and do not forget the severe re-
 “ prehension which the vindictive disciples
 “ received when they wished to call down
 “ fire from heaven upon the Samaritans, *Ye*

“ *know not what spirit ye are of, the Son of man*
 “ *is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save*
 “ *them.* Though the suppression of immo-
 “ rality and profaneness be principally re-
 “ quired of the civil magistrate, yet all of you
 “ are bound within your several spheres of
 “ influence to join in the salutary work of re-
 “ formation. The power of example is pro-
 “ verbially great, and *Jesus Christ hath given*
 “ *us an example that we should follow his steps.*
 “ You may have heard of an absurd* distinc-
 “ tion between public and private character,
 “ you may have heard that the same individual
 “ has been almost idolised in the former, and
 “ severely condemned in the latter. To so
 “ dangerous a distinction the holy Jesus gave
 “ no sanction. He was uniformly good, *it*
 “ *was his meat and drink to do the will of him*
 “ *that sent him.* He partook occasionally of
 “ the good things of this life, he contributed
 “ to the cheerfulness of a marriage entertain-
 “ ment, to shew that piety should not make
 “ men sullen and morose, but he also retired
 “ from the hurry of the world, he fasted and

* — “ Of this truth be most assur'd, that he,
 “ Who, in his private commerce with mankind,
 “ Is mean, dishonest, interested, false,
 “ Can ne'er be true to thee, nor can he love
 “ His Prince, who feels not for his country's good.”

Wiser's Institution of the Order of the Garter. p. 118-

“prayed to shew how we must all be armed
 “against temptation. In no instance lose
 “sight of your duty: * *no part of life, as a*
 “*wife heathen has observed, is without an ap-*
 “*propriated duty.* The sensualist has often
 “made loud claims to patriotism, but he is no
 “friend to his country, who is not a friend
 “to himself, and little will he consult pub-
 “lic safety, who is hastening to private
 “ruin. Consistency of character and con-
 “duct is the great ornament of every
 “station, and what Christ said to his dis-
 “ciples, is applicable in different degrees
 “to you all, *A city that is set upon a hill*
 “*cannot be hid.*”

Much more might have been added, but
 every one's judgment will supply what is
 wanting. And with what additional propriety
 is the participation of the Lord's supper re-
 quired, when it is considered as the remem-
 brance of a sacrifice offered once for all by him
 who was God from all eternity. And if the
 performance of every duty we owe to God, our
 neighbour, and ourselves, have no connexion
 with the Lord's supper, why were the com-

* Nulla enim vitæ pars neque publicis, neque privatis,
 neque forensibus, neque domesticis in rebus, neque si
 tecum agas quid, neque si cum altero contrahas, vacare
 officio potest. Cic. de Off.

mandments and the prayer for the church militant inserted in the communion service?

* A dissenting divine has erroneously asserted, that the notion of a feast after the sacrifice implied in the words, *This is my body, This is my blood*, is given up by the majority; whereas, in reality, it daily gains ground. We see with satisfaction, how effectually it refutes the doctrine of transubstantiation, how well it supports that of atonement and vicarious punishment, which affords so much comfort to the humble Christian, and so well accounts for the institution of sacrifices from the beginning of the world.

But we shall be told that the legislature, without reference to spiritual advantage, had it only in contemplation to exclude Non-conformists or Recusants from civil offices, and that it was principally aimed against the disciples of the church of Rome. In this the Dissenters beg many questions. A law may be supported by many good reasons, which did not enter into the mind of the lawgiver, or, if they did, he might find it unnecessary to express. Some may be urged in succeeding times, which either did not exist at all,

* Dr. Kippis in the fourth volume of the *Biographia Brit.*

or did not exist to so great a degree. To have enlarged upon the spiritual advantages in the acts, would have been obviously unnecessary. The service appointed by the church, the previous self-examination she requires, the public and private instructions of her ministers, for the benefit of weak and tender consciences, for the avoiding of all scruples and doubtfulness, were calculated to supply every deficiency.

Of as little avail is it to say, that the law was levelled against the Romanists. If Dissenters did sometimes conform for the sake of honour or emolument, we can have no favourable impression of his honour or integrity, who could enter upon an office by doing what he believed to be wrong. To expose the conduct of the Puritans and Presbyterians immediately after the reformation, would carry us beyond the limits of a discourse. At the very time when the acts were passed, they were in no repute or credit with government. The king, who during the usurpation, spent part of his time amongst them, most heartily despised them. The gloominess, the moroseness, the absurdity of many, both in England and Scotland,

led

led * him and his courtiers into the contrary extreme. Some of the prayers and sermons delivered in those days (and those which descend to future ages are not the worst) fill every rational mind with disgust and horror. The notion of inspiration gave a sanction to effusions, offensive both to God and man. In the conference at the Savoy, the same stubbornness, which had marked the conduct of these sectaries, still attended, the same levelling principles still prevailed, and every ray of hope was shut out. The two parties went away with additional animosity against each other. That popery and all its real or pretended conspiracies created the greatest alarm, must not be denied, but the act in question was framed to guard against the smaller as well as the more formidable danger. By another law, no one was to undertake the office of a public instructor of youth without a declaration of conformity. Much has been said of the merit of the Presbyterians in the revolution, and in the establishment of the house of Hanover. That they

* He is well known to have asserted (*and he never said a foolish thing, though he seldom did a wise one*) "that Presbyterianism was not the Religion of a Gentleman."

wished

wished for a king educated in their own way, was neither wonderful nor quite so meritorious as in the members of the church of England. But * William the Third soon found substantial reasons to be disgusted with them. Their attachment to the house of Hanover ought to give them no appropriate credit with mankind. Some of their brethren in Scotland, with some of ours in England, followed a different standard. And that, it should seem, must be a reproach to us, which is none to them. But on whatever head they have wished to place the crown, they have insidiously endeavoured to rob it of the jewels; under pretence of being the friends of the people, they have attempted to take away the prerogatives of the crown. A discourse lately published by one of their divines, presents a specimen of a petulant †

* "The king had suffered so much in his reputation, by his complaisance to the Presbyterians of Scotland, and was so displeased with the conduct of that stubborn sect of religionists, that he thought proper to admit some prelatists into the administration." Smollett's Continuation, vol. i. p. 134.

† "I rejoice, Sir, in your recovery, I thank God for his goodness to you. I honour you not only as my King, but almost as the only lawful King in the world, because the only one who owes his crown to the choice of his people. May you enjoy all possible happiness. May God shew you the folly of those

address to his Majesty, and the warmth or impetuosity of youth cannot be pleaded in defence. Of the conduct of the king there will be various opinions, but no man, who understands the constitution, who recollects the maxim of law, that he can do no wrong, would administer to him in person reproof or admonition. Whatever abuses prevail, there are other persons, who are responsible, and who, as fellow-subjects, have not the same claim to unbounded deference and respect. Even petitions and remonstrances should be so framed, as to preserve the dignity of the king, while they explain the grievances of the

“ those effusions of adulation which you are now receiving, and guard you against their effects. May you be led to such a just sense of the nature of your situation, and endowed with such wisdom, as shall render your restoration to the government of these kingdoms a blessing to it, and engage you to consider yourself as more properly the *Servant* than the Sovereign of your people.”

Notwithstanding this licentious language, the crown of England is hereditary, and when necessity compelled these kingdoms to alter the succession, the original idea was still kept in view, and William the Third was invited by the Lords and Commons, not by the body of the people. The Doctor, therefore, either has annexed no signification to his words, or a false one. The King of England, as to *appointment*, differs nothing from the kings of many other countries, and the Revolution has established no principle respecting that, which was not admitted before.

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subject. From hence by the way, may be readily conjectured, what would have been the effect of devoting a particular day to commemorate the revolution. The zealots of republicanism would take an annual occasion to irritate the minds of their fellow-subjects to applaud the conduct of the seditious abroad, and the contentious at home.

If the Dissenters have lost some of the Puritanical severity which marked their character in the last, and in the beginning of this century, they have supplied its place with what is called laxation bigotry. This bigotry, by annexing no guilt to religious opinions, however absurd, has given a sanction to such an inundation of licentious comment on the word of God, that it is a shame to recite what is daily delivered in public. * Little could

* Hume has so happily expressed the ideas meant to be conveyed in this sentence, that I shall beg leave to quote his words. Vol. v. p. 149, 150. octavo Edition.

“ Of all the European churches which shook off the
 “ yoke of papal authority, no one proceeded with so
 “ much reason and moderation as the church of Eng-
 “ land: an advantage which had been derived partly
 “ from the interposition of the civil magistrate in this
 “ innovation, partly from the gradual and slow steps
 “ by which the reformation was conducted in that
 “ kingdom. Rage and animosity against the catholic
 “ religion was as little indulged, as could be supposed
 “ in such a revolution; the fabric of the secular
 “ hierarchy

our reformers have thought, that, after they had proceeded with coolness and moderation, endeavouring to steer between two extremes, after they had reduced christianity to its primitive simplicity, much less could any of us, at the distance of more than two hundred years, when so much learned industry has been used to explain scripture, and to convince or convict gain-sayers, expect, that men in the humble occupations of life should be invited to form their own creeds, and be left exposed to all the dreadful consequences of ignorance and rashness. Is this the case in any concern besides that of religion? Does not every man act in his own sphere, and pay deference to the judgment of others, even in

“ hierarchy was maintained entire: the antient liturgy
 “ was preserved, so far as was thought consistent with
 “ the new principles: many ceremonies, become venerable from age and preceding use, were retained:
 “ the splendor of the Romish worship, though removed,
 “ had at least given place to order and decency:
 “ the distinctive habits of the clergy, according to
 “ their different ranks, were continued: no innovation was admitted merely from spite and opposition to
 “ former usage: and the new religion, by mitigating
 “ the genius of the antient superstition, and rendering it more compatible with the peace and interests
 “ of society, had preserved itself in that happy medium,
 “ which wise men have always sought, and which the
 “ people have been so seldom able to maintain.”

what

what he professes, and much more in what he cannot or ought not to profess.

The Dissenters have inverted the order of things, they have subjected the minister to his hearer, the scholar to the unlearned. So far has their absurd zeal carried them, as to make a merit of giving to the established clergy, what the laws of the land have annexed to the profession, what is not a donation, but a debt.

But we are told that in foreign countries, a Test Act is unknown. Let it also be considered that toleration is unknown in some, and supplied by connivance. But admitting for argument's sake, that Protestants in France and Spain are treated with more indulgence than Dissenters in England. They have exercised their religion with modesty and humility, they have neither murmured against church nor state, they have studied *to be quiet, and to do their own business*. If individuals from this country in the ardour of youth sometimes insulted the Romish religion in churches or processions, they were condemned by the serious and considerate, and several of our travellers with that true liberality, which distinguishes the British character, have wisely dissuaded others from following their example.

In

In allusion to the Athanasian creed, we are told by one of their ministers* in a kind of sarcasm, that having consigned them to eternal punishment, we should not exclude them from advantages, or as they style it, punish them, in this world. In condemning heresy we do not sit in judgment against individual heretics, any more than in condemning sin

* Dr. Priestley, p. 7. of his Sermon preached Nov. 5, 1789, says,

“ If they think my opinions will subject me to everlasting punishment in a *future world*, ought not *that* to be deemed sufficient, without making me suffer in *this world* also? And yet thus it is that many of us are treated by the legislature of this country. It has thought proper to declare, that all who do not believe in one of her doctrines relating to the Divine essence, shall *without doubt perish everlastingly*: but, not content with this, it is made confiscation of goods and imprisonment for life to maintain the contrary. But what connexion can there be between the peace and good order of society, and any opinion concerning the *Divine essence*?

“ If it be said that the publishing such opinions will endanger the salvation of others, as well as that of the person who holds them; I ask, what is that to the *civil magistrate*, whose business is with the things of *this life only*: who was not appointed to act any part in things of a *spiritual*, but only in those of a *temporal* nature? And how can a merely civil magistrate be supposed to be a competent judge of those matters: or, which comes to the same thing, how can he know who is best able to direct him?”

we pronounce sentence against sinners. The very contrary is the truth; the future destination of sectaries is left to the searcher of hearts, and it is the duty of the civil magistrate to disable them, if he can, from being mischievous in this world.

Every man's whole mind receives a tincture from the manner in which he is educated. Even the learned are not exempt from the charge: and the animated struggles, which were made in Greece and Rome, together with the evils which followed the loss of liberty, have given some very wise and good men a predilection for a republican form of government. The sarcasms which are daily re-echoed from the Dissenters, against human authority and human inventions or impositions, have a tendency to unhinge the mind, to introduce that general uncertainty, instability and absurdity of opinion, which preclude in civil concerns a steady enquiry after truth, and which would introduce new principles, such as neither we nor our fathers ever admitted. The fabric of our constitution was built on a solid foundation: the Dissenters wish to destroy it, or to make alterations which would lead to its destruction. *They would be ever daubing it with untempered mortar.*

tar. Justice to ourselves requires that we check their rash efforts, and that neither in a religious nor a political view, if the two must needs be distinct, we consider them as useful or innocent.

It were greatly to be wished that the wise and honest of our own communion would declare without rancour, what is to be known of them in the several places where they abound. This would be an antidote to the poison they are continually dealing out, or, to speak without a figure, would be a refutation of those bold assertions and resolutions, which they circulate through the kingdom. It would be desirable to exclude from the British senate all those who are led away by their plausible arguments, and to caution every British youth against the religious and civil maxims of Geneva.

The northern part of this island must be considered as an exception. And yet even there we find church government, we find confessions of faith, consistency, and regularity. Intolerance is somewhat abated, outward decorum in public worship is more consulted, and, if the account, which some of their brethren have given, may be relied upon, several have become proselytes to the church
of

of England. So salutary is it for them to see what it really is, and not to believe what it is represented.

* To such miserable resources are our adversaries driven, that they have declared with equal confidence and falsehood, that a minister of the church of England may pass through all gradations to the highest offices without receiving the sacrament. Do these men know, or rather can they forbear to know, that we declare conformity to the whole liturgy, that we promise to use it, to be diligent

* The Author of a Pamphlet entitled, *The Right of Protestant Dissenters to a compleat Toleration asserted*, says, p. 39. "The Test Act does not include ecclesiastical offices. They are protected only by the 1 Geo. Stat. ii. c. 13. whereby clergymen are required to qualify themselves in such cases by taking the oaths; but they are not obliged to receive the Sacrament as in the case of civil offices. The consequence of this is curious enough, for no security is given to the church that its own offices shall not be held by non-conformists, while those, with which the church has no concern, can be possessed by those only who have received its Sacrament. A country curate may be a bishop upon easier terms, than a corporal in the army can become a serjeant; and to be the chancellor or register of a prelate (who are frequently laymen) a less strict test is required than to be an ordinary excise-man." These last offices are subordinate and ministerial; the ultimate security is in the bishop, or ecclesiastical superior by whom they are appointed; chancellors, moreover as graduates of one of the universities, have subscribed to articles and liturgy.

in administering the holy sacraments, that we communicate at each time of ordination, and that we are only excused from bringing a proof of having communicated, because we are in constant habits of attending the altar?

To conclude—Though justice and prudence require us to exert our utmost endeavours to exclude the Dissenters from offices of trust and dignity, and though it would be fatal to religion, if the legislature should by any act of indulgence declare all opinions innocent, and upon this principle only could their demand be complied with, yet let us guard against private rancour and animosity, let us assist dissenters in whatever denomination we find it, let us remember that charity may be mutually exercised, and, in some future age of real liberality, reconcile contending parties better than a thousand arguments.

Finally, Let us beseech the Father of mercies, that he will grant us *the spirit to think and to do such things as be rightful, that we may not judge after the sight of our eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of our ears*, but that mercy and truth may be united in our conduct, that our righteousness, equity, and moderation may be known unto all men.

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FINIS.